



Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/ECE/1302
10 May 1994

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

HIGH-LEVEL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE
FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN:
ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

WOMEN IN A CHANGING WORLD - CALL FOR ACTION
FROM AN ECE PERSPECTIVE

Vienna International Centre
17-21 October 1994

OUTLINE OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting will be opened by the Executive Secretary of ECE and the Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Welcome and other inaugural statements will be made indicating objectives, scope and expected results of the high-level regional preparatory meeting, including the presentation of the rule of procedures, which will be based on ECE rules with slight qualifications as required.

Documentation: Rules of Procedure

2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The meeting will elect a chairperson, three vice-chairpersons and a rapporteur, as well as a (two) chairperson(s) of the open-ended Drafting Group(s) to finalize the regional inputs into the Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Regional Plan of Action on Women and Economy.

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The provisional agenda for the high-level meeting and the Programme of Work will be adopted.

Documentation: Provisional agenda and Programme of Work

4. REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES ON EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Under this agenda item an assessment will be carried out of progress made and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies on Equality, Development and Peace. This assessment will be based on the second review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies by the World Conference Secretariat and the national reports prepared by ECE member States.

Documentation: Report on the Review and Appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies at the regional level in the three major areas covered by the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies: Equality, Development and Peace.

5. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

(a) Trends in Women's Role in the Economy

The item will highlight new economic trends within the region with emphasis on how the changing economic environment affects the role, participation and situation of women. In this context, exclusion of women from the economic mainstream will be considered. The role of women in achieving sustainable development will be reviewed. The areas and proposals for concrete activities will be highlighted to eliminate gender bias and to ensure women's access to economic resources.

A holistic rather than sectoral approach would be followed with reference to major economic sectors, including work done by women in the informal and household sectors.

Documentation: Report on major trends related to women's role in the economy and sustainable development in the ECE region.

(b) Demographic and Statistical Trends and Issues

Based on the ongoing programmes of ECE, a review of the demographic trends in the region such as migration, fertility, etc., will be presented, as well as the work on gender specific statistics, including the need for new insights and methodological approaches.

Documentation: Report on the demographic situation of women in the region and on past and planned future work in improving statistics on women.

(c) Women's Access to Employment and Entrepreneurship

Discussion of employment will highlight major issues such as suppression of hierarchical gender segregation, promotion of gender equality in terms of access to employment, sectoral and occupational distribution, as well as wages and earnings, emphasizing the principle of equal pay; gender reconciliation of employment and family life through partnership in sharing tasks and responsibilities, with the support of appropriate family policy such as legal rights for working parents; life-cycle approaches to women employment with a particular focus on the situation of the elderly and young women; women's changes in work place and unemployment, and their impact on family; improvement of safety, health and working conditions of women; elimination of violence at the work place. Labour-related relative poverty will be also highlighted within the identified world trend of "feminization of poverty"; in this context, particular attention will be paid to the situation of those groups which are the most affected by unemployment in all the economies of the ECE region. 1/

Discussion on women's entrepreneurship in both market-based and transition economies will focus on the role of medium, small and micro enterprises for creating gainful entrepreneurial employment, including in the informal sector. It will highlight the need to promote women's access to credit and to their land property rights.

In this framework, special attention will be given to women's education and training needs, particularly at the managerial level.

Documentation: Report on women's access to employment and entrepreneurship.

(d) Role of Women in the Transition Processes

The specific role of and consequences for women of economic restructuring, strengthening of entrepreneurship, including through privatization, and subsequent changes in various sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, industry, energy, services, are some of the issues that will be addressed under this item. The need to apply gender analysis in economic planning and programming and in international assistance will be highlighted, as well as the need to examine social safety nets for most affected groups in countries with economies in transition.

Documentation: Report on the Role of Women in the Transition Process.

6. WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE AND GOVERNANCE

Under this agenda item women's rights and responsibilities for participation and leadership in public life and governance at all levels will be highlighted.

Contributions to policy-making from women's perspective, in the framework of public, political and civil society, including community-based governance and activities through non-governmental organizations, will be considered in this respect.

Strategies and instruments to avoid gender bias and improve the empowerment of women in political action, economic decision-making, planning and programming and management in both public and private sectors will be reviewed, including the role of communication and mass-media, political and management training, etc.

Documentation: Report on Women in Public Life and Governance.

7. THE ECE INPUT INTO THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The Fourth World Conference is expected to adopt a Platform for Action to serve as a guide to Governments for improving the situation of women.

The Commission on the Status of Women has therefore launched negotiations on the Draft Platform for action which will include the following main chapters: statement of mission, global framework, critical areas of concern covering a wide range of issues related to Equality, Development and Peace, strategic objectives derived from the critical areas of concern and action to be taken, financial arrangements, and institutional arrangements for implementation and monitoring of the platform for action.

Under this agenda item the participants will be invited to review the regional inputs for the Platform of Action to be adopted by the Fourth World Conference. The presentation of these inputs might follow the draft outline of the Platform of Action proposed by the Commission on the Status of Women. The participants might also consider a Regional Plan of Action on Women and Economy, where special attention would be paid to the improvement of the situation of women in countries in transition. This Regional Plan could subsequently be recommended as a Plan of Action for Governments of countries members of the Economic Commission for Europe.

Both documents would be prepared by the Drafting Group(s) and should be reviewed under this agenda item.

8. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The Rapporteur will present for adoption the Report of the High-level Meeting, including the regional inputs into the Platform for Action and other recommendations, preferably in the form of a regional Plan of Action.

9. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

FOOTNOTE

1/ In particular poor urban women, migrants and immigrants, disabled, those affected by HIV, refugees and ethnic minorities.